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QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-seventh year

Letter dated 24 March 1992 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit the text in English of a statement of the Government of Portugal on East Timor, issued on 24 March 1992 at Lisbon (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 103 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Fernando REINO
Ambassador of Portugal
Permanent Representative to
the United Nations

* A/47/50.

ANNEX

Statement on East Timor issued on 24 March 1992
by the Government of Portugal

The Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations has the honour to convey herewith the following statement of the Government of Portugal regarding the interception by the Indonesian Navy of the portuguese vessel Lusitânia Expresso:

1. At 0731 hours Western Australian Time on 11 March 1992, the Portuguese vessel Lusitânia Expresso, registered in the International Shipping Register of Madeira-Mar, was on passage from Darwin to Dili in international waters, at 0830.2 south, 12735.2 east, with intersecting bearings and Satellite Navigation System position coinciding, and the lighthouse of the island of Leti, bearing 183°, at a distance of 17 nautical miles and the highest ground of the Island of Jaco, bearing 284°, at a distance of 15.25 nautical miles. At this point it was intercepted by two vessels of the Indonesian Navy and prevented from exercising the right of free navigation.

2. According to the Commanding Officer's report, the Lusitânia Expresso was abusively warned and ordered not to enter, stop or anchor in the territorial waters of East Timor. This order was given whilst the ship was three nautical miles outside territorial waters.

3. In view of this attitude and the imminent danger, the commanding officer resolved, in the interest of the safety of the ship, its crew and passengers, to return to Darwin. The ship was escorted by the two above-mentioned Indonesian vessels, plus a third warship and two helicopters, which failed to observe the proper safe distance for the avoidance of collision.

4. The escort remained with the ship until approximately 0840 south, 12741.75 east. At this point, some 28 nautical miles south-south-east of Jaco, the Lusitânia Expresso heaved to; the warships encircled it in a manifestly threatening and illegal manner.

5. Moreover, these actions prevented the Lusitânia Expresso from entering the territorial waters of East Timor, a Non-Self-Governing Territory under Portuguese administration, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, and over which the Republic of Indonesia exercises no legitimate jurisdiction whatsoever.

6. The Government of Portugal lodges its firm protest with the Government of Indonesia concerning the unacceptable behaviour of Indonesian warships and helicopters with regard to the Portuguese vessel Lusitânia Expresso.

The Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations would appreciate it if the Secretary-General would transmit the text of the above-mentioned statement to the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations.